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Center and Peripheries: Locating Maine's History

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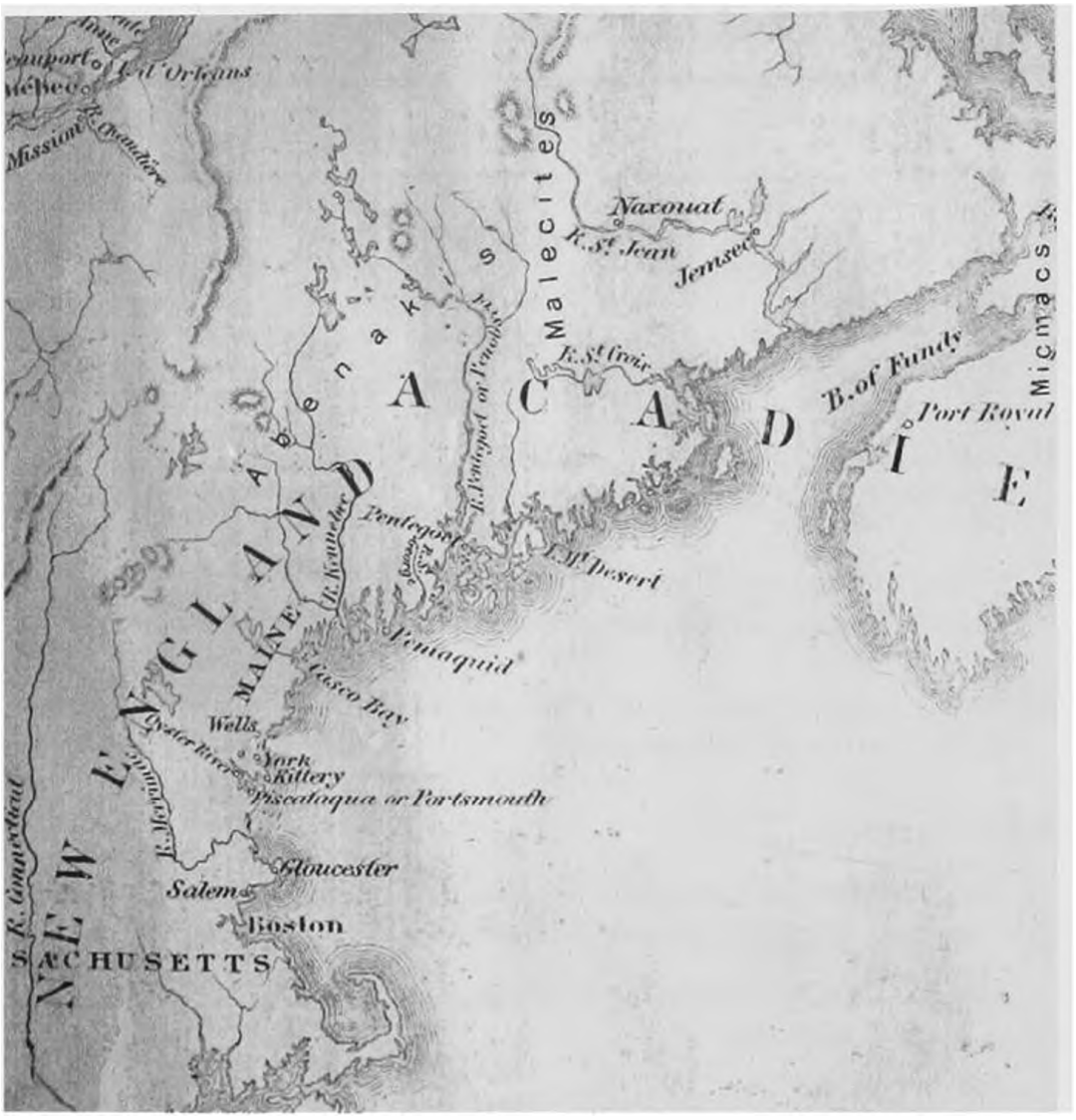


Christopher Smith and Oliver Duncomb, with crew members John Perkins, Thomas Wilcot, and Alexander Waugh, left Boston in August 1671 bound for Nova Scotia (now New Brunswick), where they traded for moose hides, beaver skins, and other valuable furs. The day-by-day account of this journey is preserved in documents stemming from a court case involving the trip's principal backer, William Waldron.

Map from Francis Parkman, The Old Regime in Canada *(1895 edition).*

WALDRON VS. SMITH: SHIPWRECK AT THE EASTWARD, 1671

By BARBARA RUMSEY

A 1672 court case reveals a tale of suspected treachery and shipwreck on the seventeenth-century New England frontier. As the narrative moves along the seaboard from Boston to Nova Scotia, details emerge about little-known aspects of life on the frontier's fringe: the fragile relations with the French and Native Americans, the movable community of coastal shipboard fur traders, and the Sagadahoc settlers who assisted them. Depositions by castaway Boston-based seamen and Sagadahoc residents provide insight into the shadowy figures and conditions that existed beyond the Kennebec River, "at the eastward." Barbara S. Rumsey was born in Buffalo, New York, and moved to East Boothbay, Maine, in 1952. She received a B.A. from Boston University in 1967 and has been director of the Boothbay Region Historical Society since 1989. In 1995 she published a book on an East Boothbay shipyard and tidemill, entitled Hodgdon Shipbuilding and Mills.

"I'LL be revenged of that cheating rogue Smith; I will let him rot in gaol, and I'll make dice of his bones." With these ungentle words chilling an August day outside a courtroom in 1672 Boston, William Waldron vowed to carry on his quarrel against Christopher Smith, after having lost the first of his many court cases against Smith. The relative comfort and warmth of the summer Boston courtroom stood in marked contrast to the season and place where the quarrel had arisen: winter, in the untamed "eastern parts" beyond the Kennebec River; now Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

Early in 1671, William Waldron, Oliver Duncomb, and Christopher Smith formed a fur trading partnership in Boston, consisting of Waldron as factor (agent), Duncomb as trader, and Smith as vessel master. They planned to invest equally in the cargo and share equally in the profits from a voyage "to the eastward."[1] The venture proved doubly disastrous. Transcripts of the several "Waldron versus Smith" court cases reveal that Waldron became convinced Smith had repeatedly cheated both him and Duncomb. Additionally, Smith and his crew were shipwrecked in eastern Maine during the severe winter months, and they

made their way west through the wilderness to the inhabited area of Sagadahoc, now a section of south coastal Maine between the Kennebec River and Pemaquid.[2] The nearly sixty Suffolk County depositions, appeals, exceptions, accounts, and notices generated by Waldron's prosecution of Smith provides us with detailed accounts of the seventeenth-century northeast. The focus of this paper is on the mission of the men, the fur trade, and their destination, Sagadahoc, after the collapse of that mission.

Studies of the mid-seventeenth-century coastal fur trade have chiefly detailed the trading posts on and east of the Kennebec River. But little is known about the posts' competitors—the independent ship-based traders—since there are few primary documents on the shipboard trade. While archaeological work at established trading posts such as Pemaquid, Clarke & Lake, Cushnoc, and Pentagoet has deepened understanding of the fur trade, the transient meetings of Euramerican traders and Indians at random anchorages and inlets left little trace.

Yet coastal shipboard trade was indeed common. Fur traders were obliged to go to Maine, Acadia, and Nova Scotia to acquire saleable skins, since most fur-bearing animals had been trapped out in lower New England. Numerous references to the problematic aspects of the independent shipboard traders cited in Emerson Baker's "Trouble to the Eastward" testify to the pervasiveness of the coastal traders.[3] However, those episodes tell us little about the fundamental elements of a trading voyage. Instead, associated problems. such as the illegal sale of liquor or guns and trespass on others' trading territory, are the foci of those incidents.

"Waldron versus Smith" illuminates, first, arrangements *within* the ship-based trading partnership and, second, the basic organization of the shipboard trade. Details of customs and procedures, economic divisions and discrete responsibilities of the partners, the provisioning of the vessel, the obligations of the crew, the destinations, kind, and value of the furs, and the convoys of ship-based traders are revealed in the case papers.

The fur traders' focus on business and profit shifted instantly to survival when they were cast away. They sought sanctuary in Sagadahoc, which was a prime destination for European fishermen in the seventeenth century. French and English fishing expeditions to the Gulf of Maine were undertaken regularly after 1602, and by the 1620s forty or fifty vessels visited per year.[4] Of the six English fishing stations created in Maine by 1632, Damariscove Island, Pemaquid, and Cape Newagen were all squarely in the Sagadahoc region. Permanent settlements followed

these trading stations, Pemaquid being settled in the 1620s. Over the next thirty years, families trickled into the Sheepscot-Damariscotta River area, and by 1671 the three principal Euramerican sites, about fifteen houses each, were Clarke & Lake on Arrowsic, Draper's at Sheepscot, and Pemaquid. Scattered between the larger population centers were farms or small clusters of dwellings at intervals averaging one or two miles. There were no more than 400 English residents in Sagadahoc.[5]

Despite the early significance of the Sheepscot-Damariscotta River region with its fishing stations, little is known about its settlers, particularly those on the lower Damariscotta River. The solitary families, really no more than names, have remained faceless, fascinating, and remote. Glimpses appear in the record occasionally—witness to a deed here, a signer of a petition there—but no life is breathed into those distant figures. The lack of documentation is a nearly impenetrable wall that rings much of Sagadahoc.

The "Waldron versus Smith" papers penetrate that wall, document-

The replica shallop servicing the Plymouth, Massachusetts, *Mayflower* suggests the scale of vessel in which Smith and his associates ranged eastward from Boston. It also suggests the precarious nature of travel in the dangerous seas off the coast of Maine.

Photo courtesy of Alden P. Stickney.

ing the words and actions of people hitherto known only by name. Seventeenth-century Damariscotta River settlers are described in dramatic, detailed narrative, taking on living proportions as they and the fur traders converge. Just as some of the shadowy Sagadahoc settlers relinquish fragments of their mystery, so too do the Boston seamen who frequented the eastern parts. Well-known seventeenth-century Maine figures, such as Sylvanus Davis and George Manning, come together and make arrangements with minor Sagadahoc figures, such as Mrs. Phillips and George Buckland. With their statements, the landscape of Maine is illuminated, peopled, and personalized in the unfolding story of shipwreck and survival, with its overlay of suspected treachery and deceit.

Eastern Politics

Seventeenth-century Maine was bracketed by Boston to the west and Acadia and Nova Scotia to the east. Boston was a commercial and administrative center, wielding enormous power over Maine, Acadia, and Nova Scotia. Despite bewildering changes in authority at the eastward, residents there steadily looked to Boston as the heart of the northeast.

The eastern parts were in a continual state of political uncertainty; many parties competed for power, and dominance by any one was tenuous. The French and English were the main competitors, but Massachusetts, the native population, and the Dutch were also principals; all factions were discontented in 1671. The 1667 Treaty of Breda gave France all land east of the Penobscot, but France wanted still more. Awarded English Nova Scotia under the treaty, France's Grandfontaine was unable to take control until 1670, because of resistance from its English governor and because of confusion over what constituted Acadia. Massachusetts was uneasy about the English royal claims east of her, and she planned to extend her claim into Sagadahoc. The Indians and English were growing increasingly suspicious of one another. Through these political struggles, Acadia, described often as stretching from Pemaquid, through present-day New Brunswick and into Nova Scotia, contained no more than 389 Euramericans. This population was almost entirely concentrated in Port Royal, where there were 295 people. The handful of other settlements held less than 15 people each.[6]

Despite the shifting political relations, English and French trade in Acadia was a constant. George Rawlyk discusses that "most perplexing dilemma": While France wished to break "Massachusetts' tight economic stranglehold" on Nova Scotia and rebuff Boston-area merchants' aggressive exploration, Grandfontaine "grew completely dependent upon the goodwill of the Massachusetts merchants and tradesmen." Similarly,

John G. Reid outlines the "willingness of Euramerican inhabitants to adapt to the changes in European authority," to freely consider allying themselves with any convenient government, regardless of nationality. He stresses that "northern New Englanders were potentially as willing to trade with merchants of France as were Acadians to trade with those of Massachusetts, depending upon where the most practical advantage lay."[7] The pragmatic inhabitants often skirted the directives intended to narrow and legislate trade.

It is against this backdrop that "Waldron versus Smith" unrolls. The perilous hazards of the frontier were compounded by the French, English, and Indian political currents, with authority ill-defined, shifting, and often flouted. The voyaging traders would have more than coastal waters to navigate.

The Voyage to Nova Scotia

In January 1671, William Waldron, Oliver Duncomb, and Christopher Smith formed a fur trading partnership. Waldron was a Boston merchant and gunsmith with interests in Dover, New Hampshire. His livelihood depended on trade with the eastern parts, and he was involved in two other well-documented incidents at the eastward. First, the newly-ascendant Dutch discovered Waldron east of present-day Castine in 1674. He was forbidden to trade in Acadia/New Holland and was relieved of his pelts. The English construed the seizure as piracy. Second, in August 1676, Waldron and a Captain Henry Lauton or Houghton were accused of kidnaping and selling seventeen Indians. "This unprovoked act convinced many of the Maine Indians to go to war in 1676."[8] Unfortunately, knowledge about Waldron's partners is minimal. No records about Oliver Duncomb survive in conventional secondary sources, and only a few peripheral facts are known about Bostonian Christopher Smith.[9]

During the winter, Waldron, Duncomb, and Smith made preparations for their voyage east. Coastal traders customarily stocked their vessels with trade goods, including food, tools, weapons, liquor, and cloth. Emerson Baker notes that bread was a "favorite commodity of the Indians," as were corn and molasses. Kettles, knives, hatchets, and other European finished goods were popular, while cloth was perhaps the "single most important trade item."[10]

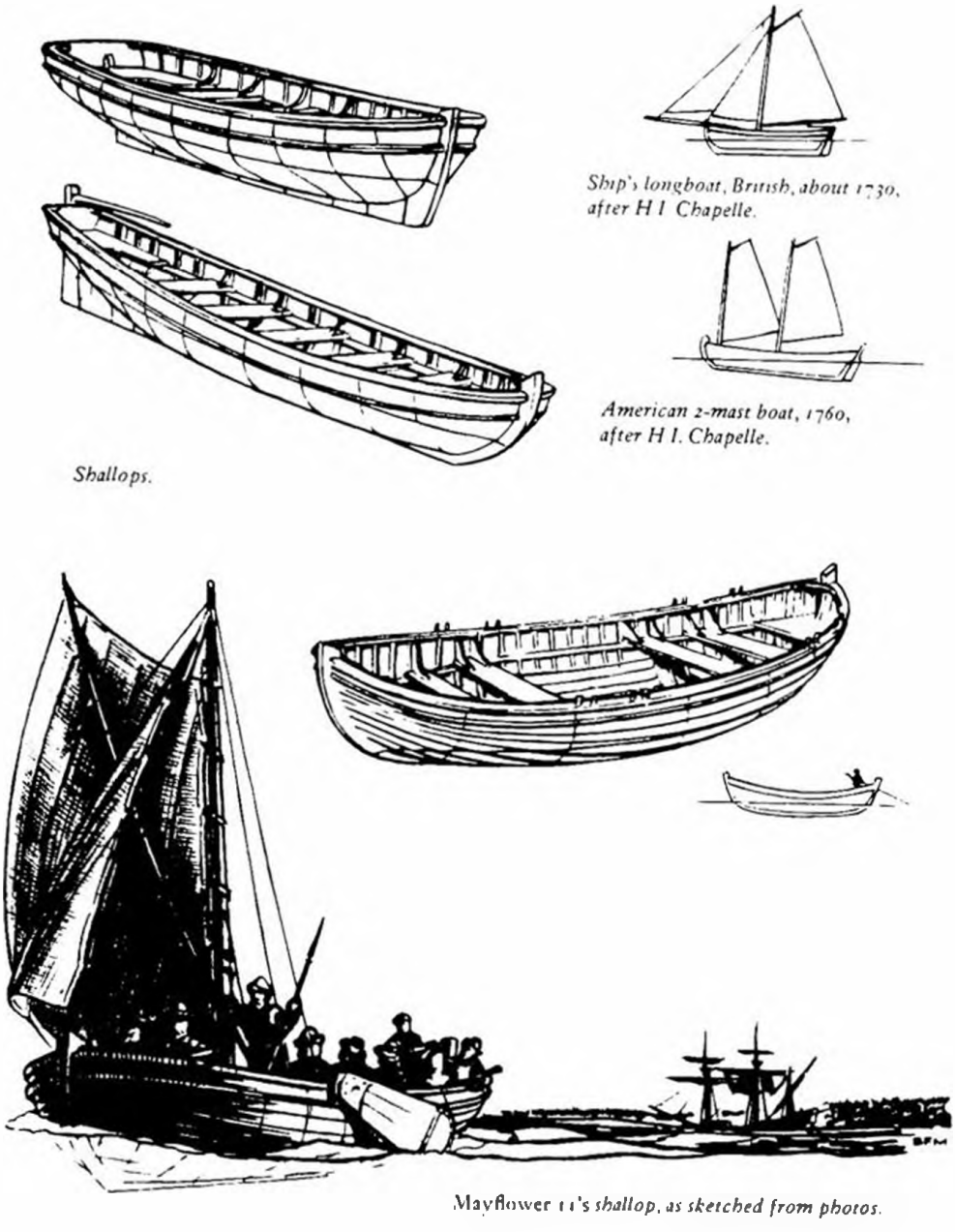
Smith purchased a portion of the goods, while Waldron and Duncomb jointly bought the balance. On January 10, Duncomb, Waldron's partner in previous voyages, provided Smith with an order to be filled by Samuel Shrimpton, an influential Boston merchant (Documents 13 and

16; see appendix).[11] Duncomb's signing the order suggests he was an old hand at provisioning trading voyages and well acquainted with Shrimpton, while Smith was apparently unknown and in need of credit. The order listed cloth of red and blue cotton, blue duffel, red stammel, and thread; kettles; shot, lead, and powder; and supplies of tobacco, pork, and rum (13). On March 13, 1671, the £71:07 order was filled, with additional sword blades, hatchets, knives, bread, funnels and lanterns, nails, flints, and cod line. The most expensive single entry was sixty-four gallons of brandy, probably intended both for trade and the crew. In aggregate, the cloth goods were twice as valuable as the liquor (45).

Duncomb and Waldron's £76:16 share of the goods, also purchased from Shrimpton, was weighted more heavily toward liquor. They obtained 141 gallons worth £15, while their cloth trade goods cost only about £16. Their provisions showed more variety: weapons such as muskets, trade guns, and a pistol; a gross of tobacco pipes and candles; bread, corn, vinegar, oil, peas, and molasses. Evidently, the vessel was not totally seaworthy since an anchor and sail work were also required.

Christopher Smith's wages as captain started August 12, 1671, perhaps the day the vessel left Boston (51). While Waldron stayed in Boston, Duncomb accompanied Smith on the voyage, with crew members John Perkins, Thomas Wilcot, and Alexander Waugh (21, 28).[12] Waugh, also called "Sander the Scotchman," said that he "did help put [goods] on board of a deck shallop at Boston about the middle of August last," and the "cargo cost £100 or more."[13] Waugh also mentioned that "he was shipped to go the voyage to the Eastward at Boston, and he was shipped at Nova Scotia to return to Boston (17)." This stipulation suggests it may have been customary for seamen to sign up for one-way trips to the eastward.

The voyagers arrived in Nova Scotia within a few days. It is unknown where they went ashore and with whom they traded, whether Indians or Euramericans. Crew member Waugh simply testified that about the middle of August, they loaded skins, consisting of nineteen moose, a hundred beaver, fifty otter, and various others, in Nova Scotia (26). The most common bartered skins in the mid-1600s were moose and beaver, while pelts of small animals, such as otter, mink, muskrat, woodchuck, and martin, were also desirable. Moose-leather clothes, popular in England, were just beginning to fade from fashion in 1670, and beaver was valued for hat-making. The moose skins were worth £1 each, the beaver only four shillings and six pence each (50). The price of beaver had steadily fallen from the 1630s high of ten shillings each to a 1670s high of



Examples of various shallop designs in use along the early Maine coast, drawn by Samuel F. Manning for *Ships Through History*, by Ralph T. Ward (1973), with permission from the artist.

eight shillings. Smith and Duncomb's price was about half the 1670s value; perhaps temporary problems had driven the price of beaver pelts down.[14] Seasonal fluctuations may have driven the price even lower, payment perhaps falling for those animals trapped after losing their heavy winter coat.

Musquash Cove

After their August fur acquisition, the men stayed at the eastward for three months, probably ducking in and out of Acadian rivers in pursuit of furs to barter. However, in November their fur inventory was identical with August's. Spring and most of the summer had passed before their arrival, and gone with those seasons was the prime time to barter with eastern Indians for winter-trapped furs. Baker explains: "Most of the trapping took place during the fall and winter hunts, on large expeditions to the interior to gather prime pelts."[15] With beaver trapped out in southerly areas, the St. Lawrence River valley had become increasingly attractive to trappers. However, in 1669 an epidemic in that valley decimated the Indian population, perhaps further curtailing the number of pelts that came down the St. John.[16] Thus, an inadequate supply of furs, as well as poor quality, probably hampered their enterprise.

Politics played no small part in the troubles the fur traders encountered. A year had passed since France, already in control of Acadia, regained Nova Scotia in 1670. After sixteen years of English control, there was probably confusion about trade practices as conditions changed. Also, various individuals were vying for exclusive control of the trade. Alaric Faulkner and Gretchen Faulkner note that in 1657 sole rights to the fur trade were divided between Temple and Crowne, two Nova Scotia proprietors. Rawlyk shows that the 1671 business was dominated by a few traders like the Frenchmen Le Borgnes and Saint-Castin and Bostonian John Nelson. Though Nelson was a compatriot of Waldron and Duncombe, he and Castin were close, and Nelson might have shut other Bostonians out of the trade, as might the Le Borgnes of Port Royal who "denied [the Boston merchants] trade with the savages."[17]

Winter was coming, and it was time to turn for Boston. Presumably unwilling to leave with unsold trade goods, the men decided to split up. Duncomb, the trader, elected to stay at the eastward. He may have tried in vain to barter the rest of the goods in Nova Scotia, and then, in frustration, left for the St. John area, controlled by Grandfontaine's lieutenant Pierre Marson. Probably Duncomb obtained Marson's express permission to reside and trade there. In November Duncomb and Perkins settled in at Musquash Cove, fifteen miles west of the St. John

River entrance, perhaps hoping to get the jump on other coastal traders by being east when the best furs appeared in late winter (36). Waugh elaborated on the goods left with them: "Smith did deliver to Oliver Duncomb and leave with him powder, shot, guns, lead, corn, woollen cloth of several sorts and shirts, hatchets, knives, sword blades, a barrel of rum, all which I conceive to amount to about two-thirds of the cargo now in controversy, which we brought from Boston" (23).

Whether it was customary for members of an expedition to stay at the eastward is unknown, but it seems unlikely. Shipboard coastal traders, always in direct competition with trading posts, could haul anchor and melt away seaward when challenged by the land-based traders. Duncomb and Perkins, stranded on the mainland with no vessel, would have been easy targets for expulsion by the posts. The two men must have lingered at Musquash Cove with local sufferance.

Shipwreck at Addiwocket

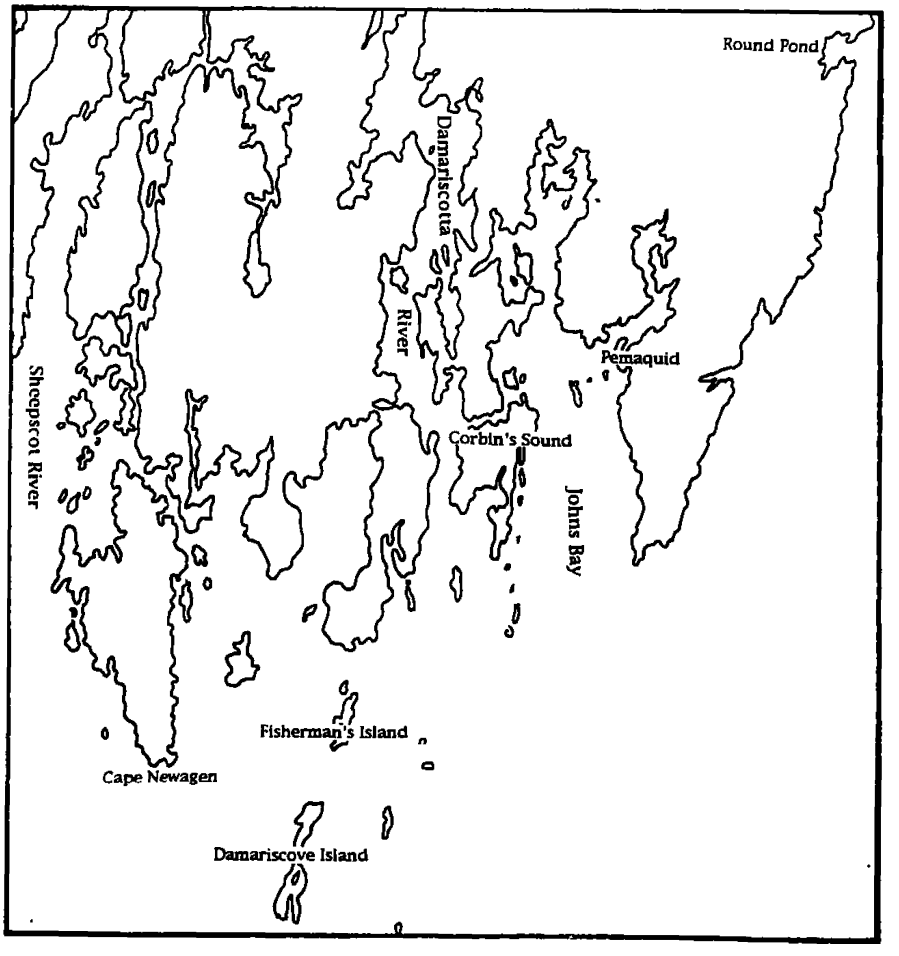
After leaving Duncomb and Perkins at Musquash Cove, Captain Smith sailed for Boston with Waugh and Wilcot in December. Within days, they encountered heavy seas and were finally shipwrecked. Waugh testified (17):

> In coming towards Boston, by reason of bad weather, we were driven off to sea for several days, so that we knew not where we were, but finding land again, we ran ashore for in the bad weather we lost several of the materials belonging to the vessel so that she was not fit to come to Boston. And when she was ashore we took out those goods that was in her, which were the aforementioned skins and one frying pan and the greatest part of the main sail. And afterwards the said Smith set fire on her willfully and burnt her upon Addiwocket Bay within side of Winskeage Island where we ran ashore . . . And adds that he saw the boat bilged before she was burnt.

Addiwocket, where the shallop's hull was bilged or stove in, is the Hancock-Sullivan area northeast of Mount Desert. In another document, Waugh used Winskeage Island's English name: "Further being off Mount Desert Hills and very much disabled, both vessel and men, so that we were not able to endure the sea any longer, we did ask the master, who, by entreaty, gave consent with us to run the vessel on shore for the safety of our lives" (23).[18] Thomas Wilcot provided other details: "And further meeting with extreme weather in which we lost our mast and rudder, we were forced to run ashore to save our lives, our shallop's bilge being beat out by the rocks, we burnt the shallop lest the sight of her hull

might betray us, the vessel being utterly disabled for the sea" (36). They were "cast away to the Eastward ye 11th of December, 1671" (51).

The three men wished to conceal their presence, fearing the "sight of her hull might betray us." But, betray them to whom? Smith may have simply felt that concealment was prudent in unfamiliar territory, or he may have feared unspecified predatory individuals or personal enemies. There was, indeed reason to fear. Seventeenth-century Acadia was a muddle of conflict and cooperation, the participants' daily inter-cultural contacts overlaid by complicated international political events. All the factions in the northeast—English, Dutch, French, Indian, and provincial Massachusetts—had experienced various affronts at each other's hands, but were also remarkably interdependent.[19] William Bradford noted in 1627 that the Maine coast was unsafe in the autumn after the



The "English Prescints," which included the Pemaquid Peninsula and its small garrison, proved to be friendly territory for the problem-plagued fur traders. The Pemaquid region, with its scattered settlements, marked the boundary between New England and Acadia.

Map courtesy of Barbara Rumsey.

fishing fleets headed back to England. "After at least several decades of rough treatment, some Indians may have considered themselves enemies of the English. The Indians would have had no compunction about killing an isolated 'enemy' and taking the trade goods, even if the victim was an honest English trader."[20]

The illicit nature of the ship-based fur trade underlies these fears. Waldron's known offenses against the Dutch and the Indians exemplify his disregard for the law, as does the enormous quantity of liquor, an illegal trade item, he purchased for the 1671 voyage. The fur-trading "coasters," as Emerson Baker points out, "had no permanent stake in the region and therefore were more likely to cheat the Indians or to trade them arms and liquor."[21] The partners and crew members may have created a host of vengeful enemies through past transgressions, and they may have been enemies of others simply by being Englishmen.

The shipwrecked men were stranded on French territory inhabited by Indians. Duncomb had earlier been left in French territory at Musquash Cove, but presumably with the explicit knowledge and protection of Marson. Duncomb's welcome at Musquash Cove did not ensure the shallop's safety elsewhere. Addiwocket was a hundred miles west of Musquash Cove, and English Sagadahoc was still another hundred miles westward.

The Journey West to the English "Prescincts"

It cannot be firmly determined how the captain and crew traveled west, whether on foot or by water. No small boat is mentioned among the things saved before the shallop was burned. Smith mentions traveling in "that waste wilderness," a term more associated with land than water. However, travel by water was desirable and customary. Some time after being cast away they hired three Indian women "for transporting of them to the English prescincts," suggesting the women might have had canoes (1). Smith stated at one point that there were eight in the group, implying that the three Indian women had two men, women, or children with them as well (15). Despite the wreck, they lost only a few otter and one moose skin, so they had a sizable load, the 150 furs alone weighing nearly 500 pounds. But whether the women carried the furs, pulled them by travois, or transported them in canoes is unknown. With a frying pan for cooking and the main sail as a tent, they had the means of survival.

The depositions do not detail the travails of Smith, Waugh, Wilcot, and the Indian women who brought them from Mount Desert to "the

English Prescincts." However, Smith billed his partners for his time, saying (15):

> And the reason why I charge wages after the vessel was cast away in the former voyage is because I and my men's labor and pains was unspeakable greater then, than before when the vessel reigned, for besides the particular care and pains we were at in saving what we could, the cold, hunger, and fears that did attend us in that waste wilderness was unspeakable nor can my self that underwent it then, by God's assistance, be now sensible of it.

What were "the English Prescincts?" The Pemaquid Peninsula, protected by a garrison, was the last recognized English outpost before the fluid eastern frontier was reached. That peninsula was reasonably safe ground. Wilbur Spencer notes that John Brown's house at New Harbor, on the eastern side of the peninsula, was "presumed by the early French colonists to mark the boundary between New England and Acadia, as established by the patent of Alexander in 1635." Thirty-six years later, Grandfontaine's 1671 map confirms that Brown's house was still recognized by the French as the boundary with New England.[22]

The group made no recorded stops until they reached the Pemaquid Peninsula. Given the bitter season in which they traveled, no doubt they would have stopped at every feasible inhabited spot along the way. Any structure more solid than their tent would have presented a great temptation. Their bypassing the French fort at Pentagoet (present-day Castine), Grandfontaine's chosen seat, reinforces the assumption that they feared the French, and avoided contact.

Smith, Wilcot, Waugh, and the Indians arrived at Round Pond after nearly six weeks' travel.[23] No doubt the houses were welcome sights. In January 1672 Round Pond was a small settlement on the east side of Pemaquid Peninsula, eight or ten miles northeast of Pemaquid and a few miles north of New Harbor. Its principal inhabitants were Richard Pierce and his son-in-law Richard Fulford. Present also was a visitor called Captain Rhoades. Not a name associated with the Pemaquid area, probably he was Captain John Rhoade of Boston.[24] Having arrived in an inhabited area, Smith and his crew apparently no longer needed their cooking utensil, for Smith sold the frying pan to Captain Rhoades. Smith spent £1:8 for provisions at Round Pond, where the men and "squaws" stayed "from daybreak one morning till next day noon" (1, 15, 51). Setting out at noon, their last day of travel took them to Corbin's Sound on the Bristol peninsula.

Corbin's Sound and Fisherman's Island

Smith "did bargain with the Indians for to pay them for bringing of us into Corben Sound."(20) The term designates the Damariscotta River waters southwest of present-day South Bristol. However, the South Bristol peninsula, also called Buckland's Neck in the 1600s, took its name, Corbin's Sound, from the adjacent waters.[25] There Smith discharged the Indians, paying them about £10 in beaver pelts and his own and Wilcot's clothing.(50, 15, 23). Why did Smith designate Corbin's Sound as his destination when he hired the women? Once safe on the Pemaquid Peninsula, any place, such as New Harbor, Round Pond, or Pemaquid, was within English territory. The likeliest explanation is that Smith, acquainted with the area's settlers, knew that George Buckland of Corbin's Sound was best equipped to help them get back to Boston. No doubt the traders and fishermen knew all the homesteads and their respective resources between Boston and Nova Scotia, the distance perhaps a two-day voyage with good conditions. Buckland's Sagadahoc location, nearly halfway between Boston and the St. John River, may have been where Smith broke his eastern voyages, sleeping ashore there for a night if his vessel was traveling coastwise.

George Buckland was in the area before 1647, on Ball Island (also Holmes, now Rutherford's) at the south end of the neck, and was licensed to have a "house of public entertainment" in 1674.[26] Buckland deposed that "Christopher Smith did lodge at his house all the time he was at Corbins Sound" (40). Buckland's land included "100 acres on Ball Island. Two ffarmes lying between Damaris Cotty and Pemaquid Back River fronting to a through faire that runs between Damaris Cotty and Pemaquid."[27] Buckland apparently faced the gut that separates Rutherford's Island from South Bristol. This was a fine central location, allowing Buckland to benefit by both the Damariscotta River and Pemaquid traffic.

Apparently, Smith had an extended stay at Corbin's Sound. Remarks by Buckland about "fetching the boat and trimming [fitting out] the boat" show that some preparation was necessary for the last leg to Boston.(40, 51). During the stay at Corbin's Sound, Waugh left the group after being together with Smith and Wilcot for five months and seventeen days (1). Waugh apparently boarded a coaster as crew about January 29, 1672. Smith and Wilcot needed more help in returning to Boston than Buckland could supply. Mrs. Phillips of Fisherman's Island and Sylvanus Davis stepped in.[28] Mrs. Phillips is a hitherto unidentified Sagadahoc inhabitant; Sylvanus Davis was a prominent coastwise trader

Fisherman's Island was part of a small settlement of fishers and traders in the Pemaquid area. It was here that Christopher Smith bargained with Mrs. Phillips for the use of a shallop, after scuttling his own vessel in the Mt. Desert area.

Photos courtesy of Nathaniel S. Wilson and Stephen Rubicam.

in the eastern parts who bought land on the Damariscotta River in 1659. He later served as agent for Clarke & Lake on the Kennebec River.[29]

Smith and Buckland sailed south about four miles from Corbin's Sound to Fisherman's Island to arrange for a boat with Mrs. Phillips. She agreed to rent Smith a shallop and traded three barrels of mackerel for the main sail they had brought from the wreck site (20, 34). The three barrels of mackerel and her island location suggest that Mrs. Phillips lived with her fisherman son or sons, one of whom described Smith's negotiations with Mrs. Phillips in fall 1672 (34).

After Smith and Mrs. Phillips came to their arrangement, Buckland and Smith sailed to Corbin's Sound, where they "met with Silvanus Davis in a boat." Davis offered to carry Smith to Boston "for nothing" (40). Two others confirmed the conservation, whereupon "Mrs. Phillips who owned the boat . . . request him to leave her said boat and to accept of the said Davis his proffer abovesaid, but he refused it"(32, 37).[30] Smith did not explain why he chose to rent a vessel instead of taking Davis's offer.

Though individual homesteads were at some distance from each other, a sense of community emerges with these depositions. All these people—Smith, Buckland, Davis, Phillips, and Peter Woodhouse and John Hincks, who verified Buckland's testimony—came together at Corbin's Sound on one or more occasions, either by water or land, to settle Smith's predicament. The rubrails of Davis's and Buckland's boats must have knocked together in the Damariscotta River as Smith described their plight and Davis offered his help. The assistance provided to Smith by George Buckland and Mrs. Phillips indicates their establishments were substantial, their homesteads containing abundant supplies and housing frequent visitors. Buckland was not only a carpenter and innkeeper, with two farms, but was equipped to trim the shallop. Mrs. Phillips must have had more than one vessel, to afford the absence of one, and plenty of fish to trade three barrels of mackerel for the sail.

Smith and Wilcot stayed at Corbin's Sound about a month, from mid-January to mid-February. Before leaving, they paid Buckland two moose skins and nineteen shillings for labor, bread, and board, and promised to pay an additional nineteen shillings (2, 40). Smith and Wilcot left for Boston in Mrs. Phillips's shallop, with £1:5 worth of provisions provided by her. They arrived without incident in Boston on February 22, having been gone six months and ten days. Smith sold the beaver to Mr. Bateman, the moose and otter to Mr. Shippen, and the martin to Mr. Travers, the proceeds totaling over £70 (51).

Soon after arriving in Boston, Smith attempted to return the leased vessel, delivering the Phillips "shallop unto John Ridley to go a voyage to

the Eastward." Ridley had previously been partners with Waldron and Duncomb, no doubt serving as master for a trading voyage to the Bay of Fundy. He hired Job Tookie and Thomas Wilcot to accompany him in the spring of 1672, but "things falling contrary to expectation," he didn't set out (16, 30).[31] Apparently, Wilcot was a seaman by trade and, after waiting six weeks for Ridley's departure, he finally shipped on another vessel to the eastward (33). These arrangements imply that spring voyages to the eastward were commonplace and that crews' livelihoods depended on regular repeated voyages.

Troubles Mount

On March 2, 1672, only days after his arrival in Boston, Smith left for the eastward in a sloop. Without contacting Waldron in Dover and despite the rigors he experienced after the December shipwreck, Smith was on another venture, "trading for himself" this time with an assortment of goods including cloth, powder, shot, guns, tobacco, corn, and kettles (1, 18). He may have also intended to retrieve Duncomb and Perkins from Acadia. Accompanying Smith as crew were John Aunt and John Williams. A volatile man often in trouble, Williams was involved in more than a dozen lawsuits.[32] Not surprisingly, he and Smith did not get along, and Williams deposed about their quarrel (18):

> In going at St. John River, the said Christopher Smith and he disagreed, whereupon Christopher Smith put him ashore without any wages, but complaining to others that was there with other vessels how that he should make a broken voyage, by reason of his absence. Thereupon they persuaded him to go aboard on the sloop again, on which they traded with the Indians till that they was willing to return.

Williams confirmed that Smith dealt directly with Indians, trading the goods for forty moose skins, about seventy-five beaver, and otter, martin, and muskrat skins. Perhaps he had made useful contacts on his previous trip and hastened back to the eastward to capitalize on them at the optimum time. In the spring, the St. John was a busy place, with many vessels in the river. Again, as with the February events near Corbin's Sound, a sizable waterborne community is evident, with many people persuading Williams to reboard the sloop.

Meanwhile, things were not going well for Oliver Duncomb and John Perkins, who had been at Musquash Cove since November. Perhaps Smith, sailing right by Musquash Cove, checked on their well-being before he ascended the St. John in early March 1672. But trouble arose by

late March, according to the testimony of five veteran coastal traders: Thaddeus McCarthy, Edward Naylor, James Debeck, Richard Shute, and George Manning.

While Smith was trading at the St. John River, Bostonian Thaddeus McCarthy and Edward Naylor became trading partners at Muspecky (now Moosabec Reach near Jonesport) on March 28, 1672. Naylor, like John Williams, was a "well-known reprobate" and a fixture in the eastward fur trade.[33] Naylor and McCarthy swore that (42):

> Next day we sailed for Machias, where we had news of Oliver Duncomb's death, and also of John Perkins being very sick and debilitated of his limbs. From thence we made what haste we could to him to Musquash Cove and found him as aforesaid. We took him on board Mr. Naylor's vessel, and sometime after we met Christopher Smith at Johns River.

According to Williams, Smith heard of Duncomb's death (the cause unrevealed) and Perkins' departure from Musquash Cove, then spent three weeks or more waiting for Perkins to appear in the St. John (31). Though Smith was trading for himself, he apparently stepped in to protect his interest in the goods left with Duncomb. But the situation was complicated by the disposition of those goods, as described by James Debeck and Richard Shute.[34] During spring 1672, Shute's bark was in company with the trading bark *Phillip*, captained by George Manning and owned by John Freake. Debeck, a crew member of the *Phillip*, and Shute deposed that Duncomb's goods were loaded (for eventual return to Boston) into the *Phillip* at Musquash Cove in April 1672 (39, 41). Manning then proceeded on his way up the St. John River, trading with Indians (1).

When Smith finally found Perkins on board Naylor's boat in May, somewhere in the St. John River, Shute and Manning witnessed the meeting, implying that the three vessels—Shute's, Manning's, and Naylor's—were convoying together in the river (35, 38). Smith compensated Naylor and McCarthy for Perkins' rescue and transport, paying about £13 in beaver skins (at eight shillings a pound, the 1670s high price) for their vessel hire and for Perkins' seven weeks of provisions. Smith also paid Perkins' wages in moose and beaver skins, presumably for his efforts on behalf of the Waldron/Duncomb/Smith partnership (42). Smith took all of Duncomb's furs and goods from Manning and loaded them on his vessel (41). Apparently liquor had been the most popular trade item; all 205 gallons were gone. Smith sent three trading guns and a few otter and beaver skins to his wife by way of Manning and

Shute (18). Evidently Manning and Shute were making for Boston, while Smith intended to linger at the eastward. His sending items and the prevalence of barter indicates that hard money was scarce.

Eventually Smith headed for Boston. Along the way turmoil arose again when difficulties with Williams flared up. The second quarrel between Smith and Williams underlines their stormy relationship. Daniel Vickers' comments on seventeenth-century fishermen are applicable to fur traders as well: "A trade that demanded such strict cooperation in a hostile environment, as did working in small boats at sea, was certain to generate levels of interpersonal friction." Life at sea, with its danger, deprivation, and "erratic structure of work," required an independence and disregard for convention that would lead naturally to a strong self-sufficient streak.[35] Given John Williams' assumed wild nature, he may have been unwilling to submit to a captain's authority. Williams outlined the events after the quarrel (18):

> But in returning toward Boston, they stayed one night at Kabunkidle and they there disagreed again, in so much that Christopher Smith turned him ashore again without his pay, and withal told him that he should never have it; but that he should not be left destitute of succor, one Richard Shute came with a boat and another man and took him aboard upon another vessel and desired and persuaded him to go on board Christopher Smith's vessel again, which by their persuasions was willing and proffered to go aboard on Mr. Smith's vessel, but he would not let him come aboard but told him that he would shoot him or be the death of him if he set his foot upon his vessel.

The location of Kabunkidle is unknown, although the name is reminiscent of "Kennebunk," a large community in 1672. "Destitute of succor" implies it may have been a desolate spot in the wilderness. However, there were multiple vessels in the area, for Richard Shute and another were there to intervene (18). Clearly, wherever a trading vessel was in the eastern parts, it was likely there were numerous others nearby—at least during the customary trading months.

Apparently without Williams, Smith continued toward Boston, but, "Being blown to Piscataquay, I was necessitated to dispose of the goods myself." He sold the goods in Marblehead, though it is not clear why he was obliged to do so; one guess is that the sloop was disabled (15). Of the skins, moose and beaver were broken down into two categories. "Moose out of hair" sold for fifteen pence a pound and hairy moose at twelve pence. Beaver sold at six shillings a pound, while shaggy and papoose beaver at three shillings (49). The prices were below the eight-shilling

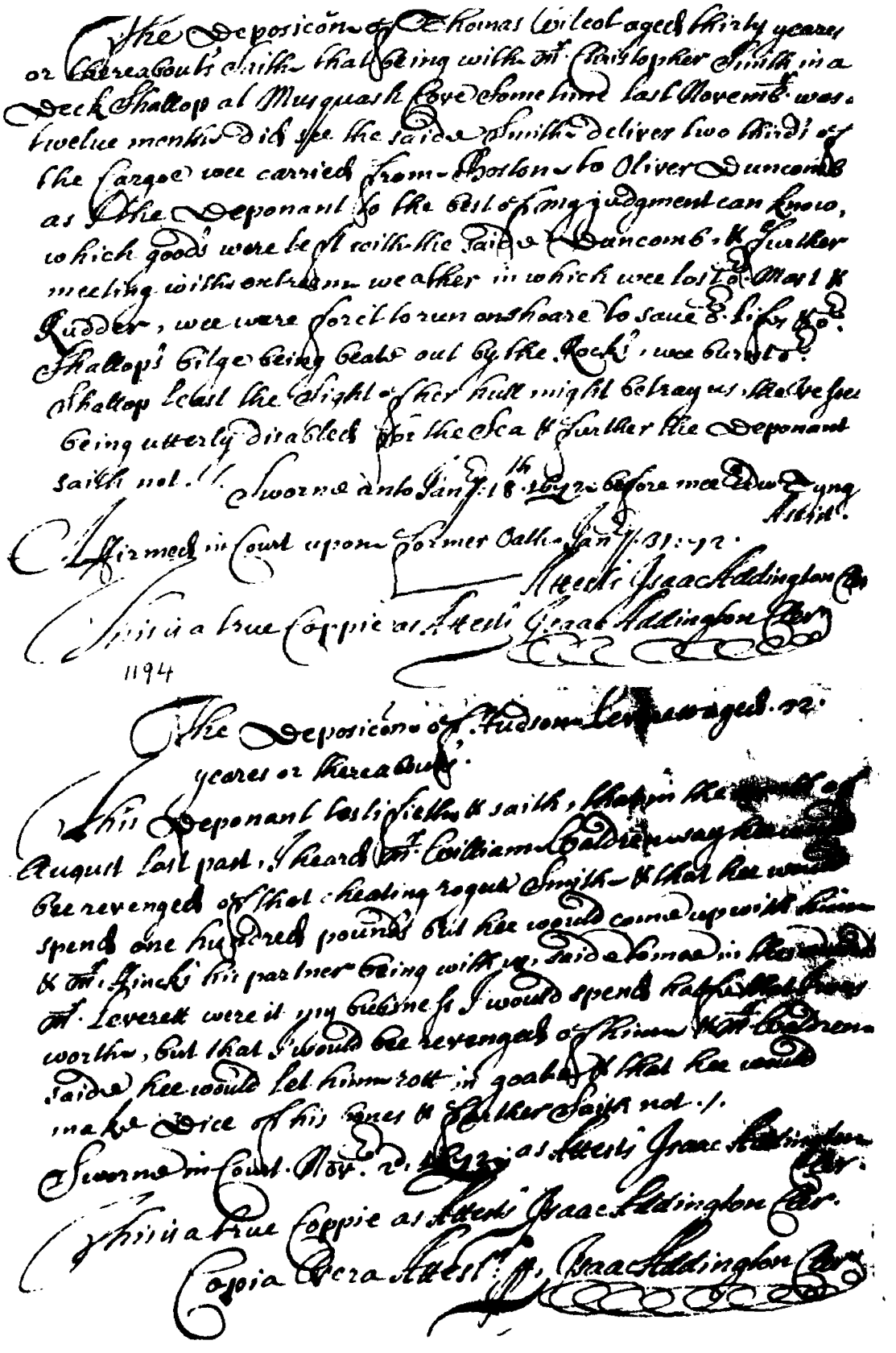
top price for beaver, despite Smith's being east at the optimum time to barter for skins.

Smith arrived back in Boston some time in July, and found that Ridley had not yet returned Mrs. Phillips' shallop to Fisherman's Island. But Smith could not return it himself, "being imprisoned by my antagonist I was incapacitated to convey her home" (15). Waldron had begun his pursuit of Smith through the court system.

In July 1672 William Waldron, suspicious of Smith by mid-May, formally accused him of cheating his partners. Smith was jailed from July 13 to July 30, when the first trial was held (8,10, 12).[36] Waldron narrowly contested more than twenty of Smith's expenses, accusing him of such offenses as surreptitiously disposing of the skins, overcharging for provisions and boat rental, and needlessly waiting for Perkins in the St. John. Waldron's venomous antipathy expressed itself in insulting language and sarcasm, with Waldron commenting, for instance, that the expense to get home after the shipwreck was "enough to carry them to England." Waldron, a powerful businessman, employed clever, convoluted arguments while Smith, more used to rough deck-board justice, petitioned the jury plainly and simply. Waldron attacked Smith's bill for his wages because, as a partner it was argued he was due no wages; yet if he were judged to be due wages, he still should not be paid because, with the vessel wrecked, he was not employed as captain (1, 15). Following the January case, Waldron and Smith sued each other in October. A mediation, umpired by Thomas Lake, took place in November, but in January 1673 Waldron sued Smith again. Waldron addressed an appeal to the next Court of Assistants, and in May an audit was conducted. The auditors' focus, isolating the bookkeeping from the distracting accusations and hostility, seems to have finally brought the long process to a close. Smith won every case—the four trials, the mediation, and the audit. All his expenses were vindicated.

Our view of the foregoing circumstances is restricted and shaped by the narrow, legal frame of the trials whose purpose was to explicate and assign fault for the disastrous fur trading venture. Although this story of shipwreck, survival, and suspected treachery is necessarily incomplete, Waldron's unreasonably tenacious prosecution of Smith provides a timeless gift, an opportunity for rare glimpses into conditions, settlers, and seamen at the eastward. Sagadahoc, lit with robust but little-known settlements that flickered in 1675 and winked out in 1689, takes a half step forward out of the shadows.

But this article is only one narrative drawn from the volume of material contained in the case documents. The details of the 1672 and



Document 36

The Deposition of Thomas Wilcot Aged 30 years or thereabouts

Saith that being with Mr. Christopher Smith in a deck shallop at Musquash Cove sometime last November was ? 12 months did see the said Smith deliver ⅔ of the cargo we carried from Boston to Oliver Duncomb as the deponet to the best of my judgement can know, which goods were left with the said Duncomb. And further meeting with extreme weather in which we lost our mast and rudder, we were forced to run ashore to save our lives, our shallop's bilge being beat out by the rocks, we burnt the shallop lest the sight of her hull might betray us, the vessel being utterly disabled for the sea, and further the deponent saith not.

Sworn unto Jan'y 18, 1672 before me Edward Tyng Assist

Affrmed in court upon former oath Jan'y 31, 1672 Attests Isaac Addington Clerk

This is a true copy as attests Isaac Addington Clerk

Document 29

The deposition of Hudson Leverett, aged 32 years or thereabouts

This deponent testifieth and saith that in the month of August last past, I heard Mr. William Waldron say that he would be revenged of that cheating rogue Smith. And that he would spend £100 but he would come up with him, and Mr. Hincks, his partner, being with us, said to me in these words, "Mr. Leverett, were it my business I would spend half that I was worth, but that I would be revenged of him," and Mr. Waldron said he would let him rot in goal and that he would make dice of his bones and further saith not.

Sworn in court Nov. 2, 1672 as Attests Isaac Addington Clerk

This is a true copy as attested Isaac Addington Clerk

Copia vera per Isaac Addington clerk

1673 cases deserve attention, as do the Sagadahoc residents and their role as way stations for eastern seafarers. The 1674 Dutch piracy incident, alluded to earlier, is a twin narrative involving many of the same people—Manning, Waldron, Fulford, Debeck, Rhoade, and perhaps Williams. Their dual involvement in both episodes implies there was a persistent group of eastern traders in the 1670s who shared in many of the incidents at the eastward.

"Waldron versus Smith" is a human drama into which the unpredictable and capricious intruded. It is finally about things going wrong, "things falling contrary to expectation," and the scramble to recover. Not everyone recovered their losses. Waldron not only failed to "make dice of his bones," but ensured that Smith would attain the immortality of the printed word in a story of men on the frontier living by their wits.

Appendix A: Waldron vs. Smith Document List
(Suffolk court case #1194, Massachusetts Archives, numbered by B. Rumsey)

1: Waldron exceptions, undated.
2: Smith's response to Waldron's exceptions following the January 28, 1673 case.
3: Waldron/Duncomb exceptions following the January 28, 1673 case, dated 2/2/73; Waldron exceptions following the January 28, 1673 case, dated 2/2/73.
4: Verdict in January 28, 1673 Waldron/Duncomb vs. Smith.
5: Verdict in October 29, 1672 Smith vs. Waldron.
6: November 29, 1672 Smith attachment and December 23, 1672 bond for Waldron vs. Smith.
7: August 2, 1672 Smith attachment and imprisonment for Waldron vs. Smith.
8: Verdict in July 30, 1672 Waldron vs. Smith.
9: Verdict in October 29, 1672 Smith vs. Waldron/Duncomb.
#10: Verdict in July 30, 1672 Waldron/Duncomb vs. Smith.
#11: November 29, 1672 Smith attachment and December 23, 1672 bond for Waldron/Duncomb vs. Smith.
#12: July 5, 1672 Smith attachment and imprisonment for Waldron vs. Smith.
#13: January 10, 1671 Duncomb goods order to Shrimpton for Smith, dated 1/29/73. Smith vs. Waldron/Duncomb court costs (probably 1/29/73).
#14: Waldron exceptions, presumably (undated, untitled, but identical to #1).
#15: Smith's answers, undated.
#16: John Ridley deposition, dated 5/13/72, 5/31/72.
#17: Alexander Waugh deposition, dated 5/31/72.
#18: John Williams deposition, dated 5/31/72.

#19: John Williams deposition, dated 8/29/72.
#20: Thomas Wilcot deposition, dated 8/29/72.
#21: John Perkins deposition, dated 8/29/72.
#22: John Aunt deposition, dated 8/30/72.
#23: Alexander Waugh deposition, dated ?/30/72 (probably 8/30/72).
#24: Edward Rolfe deposition, dated 8/30/72.
#25: Thomas Norman deposition, dated 11/2/72.
#26: Alexander Waugh deposition, dated 12/5/72.
#27: Edward Jones deposition, dated 1/31/73.
#28: Thomas Wilcot deposition, dated 12/30/72.
#29: Hudson Leverett deposition, dated 11/2/72.
#30: Job Tookie deposition, dated 1/1/73.
#31: John Williams deposition, dated 1/20/73
#32: John Hincks deposition, dated 1/21/73, 1/31/73.
#33: John Ridley deposition, dated 1/31/73
#34: Roger Rose deposition, dated 1/31/73.
#35: George Manning deposition, dated 1/31/73.
#36: Thomas Wilcot deposition, dated 1/18/73, 1/31/73.
#37: Peter Woodhouse deposition, dated 1/21/73.
#38: Richard Shute/James Debeck deposition, dated 1/31/73.
#39: James Debeck deposition, dated 1/15/73, 1/31/73.
#40: George Buckland deposition, dated 1/31/73.
#41: Richard Shute deposition, dated 1/1/73, 1/31/73.
#42: Edward Naylor/Thaddeus Makarty deposition, dated 1/31/73.
#43: Isaac Waldron account of vessel building expenses, undated.
#44: Thomas Matson deposition, dated 1/31/73.
#45: List of goods sold Smith & Co. March 13, 1671 (probably filling of order #13), undated.
#46: List of goods and their value put on shallop mid-August, 1671, undated.
#47: Waldron's July 5, 1672 appointment to administration of Duncomb's estate, undated.
#48: Waldron vs. Smith court costs, dated 5/9/73.
#49: List of goods received from Smith July 22, 1672, undated.
#50: Smith's accounts of the eastward voyages, and auditors' notes, dated 5/6/73.
#51: Smith's accounts of the eastward voyages, dated 5/31/72.

Publications of The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, vol. 29, includes published versions of documents 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 29, and 42.

NOTES

1. The phrases "the eastern parts" or "to the eastward" are vague terms indicating the land east of Boston.

2. Mid-seventeenth-century Maine was roughly divided into three regions. Between New Hampshire and the Kennebec River there were 3,000

people, some in sizeable towns. Sagadahoc, between the Kennebec and Pemaquid, was sparsely settled. Land east of the Pemaquid peninsula was regarded as French territory, though it was nearly empty of settlers; trading posts were the principal marks the French placed on the landscape.

3. Emerson Baker, "Trouble to the Eastward: The Failure of Anglo-Indian Relations in Early Maine," Ph.D. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1986, pp. 113-51.

4. Ibid., p. 52.

5. Edwin A. Churchill, "English Beachheads," in Richard W. Judd, Edwin A. Churchill, and Joel W. Eastman, eds., *Maine: The Pine Tree State from Prehistory to the Present* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1995), p. 66.

6. William D. Williamson, *The History of the State of Maine* (Hallowell: Glazier, Masters & Co. 1832), pp. 407–10, 441–42; John Johnston, *A History of Bristol and Bremen* (Albany: John Munsell, 1873), pp. 107–08; George A. Rawlyk, *Nova Scotia's Massachusetts* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), p. 37; John G. Reid, *Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 157–58; Alaric Faulkner and Gretchen Faulkner, *The French at Pentagoet,1635–1674: An Archaeological Portrait of the Acadian Frontier* (Augusta: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 1987), p. 25.

7. Rawlyk, *Nova Scotia's Massachusetts*, pp. 34, 36; Reid, *Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland*, p. 154.

8. *Records of the Court of Assistants of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay, 1630-1692* (Boston: County of Suffolk, 1901), v. 1, pp. 36, 87; *Collections of the Maine Historical Society* (Portland: Thurston, 1900), v. 6, p. 56; E. W. Baker to the author, November 29, 1996.

9. In 1681 Smith's wife Dorcas petitioned for liberty to marry another man, Smith having disappeared seven years earlier. *Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Suffolk County Court Files* (Boston, 1933), v. 29, pp. 258, 341, 434. *Records of the Court of Assistants* v. I, p. 200.

10. Baker, "Trouble to the Eastward," pp. 139-40.

11. The parenthetical numbers refer to the quoted Waldron vs. Smith case documents listed in Appendix A. Complete transcripts, typed by the author, are available at Maine Historical Society and the Maine State Library.

12. In 1675 Wilcot served as a boatswain on the ship Blessing's voyage to the West Indies and France. *Publications of The Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, v. 30, p. 663.

13. A shallop was a double-ended workboat, probably about thirty-five feet long. See William A. Baker, *Sloops and Shallops* (Barre: Barre Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 20–29, 156.

14. Baker, "Trouble to the Eastward," pp. 142–43. Twenty shillings to a pound, twelve pence to a shilling.

15. Ibid, p. 121.

16. Harald Prins, "Turmoil on the Wabanaki Frontier, 1524–1678," in Judd, Churchill, and Eastman, eds., *Maine*, p. 113.

17. Faulkner and Faulkner, *The French at Pentagoet, p. 21; Rawlyk, Nova Scotia's Massachusetts*, pp. 34–35.

18. Fannie H. Eckstrom, *Indian Place-names of the Penobscot Valley and the Maine Coast* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1978), pp. 209–10. Eckstrom defines Winskeag as the Otter Creek area on the southeastern shore of Mount Desert; evidently the term was also used to identify the whole island.

19. Reid, *Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland*, p. 185.

20. Baker, "Trouble to the Eastward," p. 120.

21. Ibid., p. 119.

22. Wilbur D. Spencer, *Pioneers on Maine Rivers* (Portland: Lakeside Printing, 1930), p. 356; *Collections of the Maine Historical Society* 4 (1899): 428; Faulkner and Faulkner, The French at Pentagoet, p. 27.

23. The lengths of time cited are extrapolated from information in the depositions, such as how many days the men were paid.

24. *Collections of the Maine Historical Society*, 4, p. 82; George F. Dow and John H. Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast*, 1630–1730 (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1996), pp. 44–53.

25. *York Deeds* (Bethel: E. C. Bowler, 1904), v. 4, p. 58.

26. Buckland witnessed a Casco deed in 1651. He also took the 1665 oath of allegiance and the 1674 oath of fidelity. See Johnston, *A History of the Towns of Bristol and Bremen*, pp. 104, 112, 114.

27. *Maine Historical and Genealogical Recorder* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1895), v. 7, p. 180.

28. Fisherman's Island was also called Hippocriss, Ayppocriss, and Ippocrists in depositions 20, 33, and 34.

29. Sibyl Noyes, Charles T. Libby, and Walter G. Davis, *Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1988), p. 187.

30. Ibid., p. 337.

31. Ibid., p. 688.

32. Ibid., p. 756.

33. Ibid., p. 505; *Publications of The Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, v. 29, p. liii.

34. An Indian trader before 1641, Shute lived in the Pemaquid area. Spencer, *Pioneers on Maine Rivers*, pp. 303, 354; *York Deeds*, v. 20, p. 88; Noyes et al, *Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire*, p. 633.

35. Daniel Vickers, "Work and Life on the Fishing Periphery," in David D. Hall and David G. Allen, eds., *Seventeenth-Century New England* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1984), pp. 95, 99.

36. Each trial consisted of two cases tried at once, Waldron vs. Smith and Duncomb's estate versus Smith.